

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 1691

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, ILO, UY
SUBJ: GOU CHOOSES LABOR DELEGATES FOR ILO ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

REF: MONTEVIDEO 1457

1. SUMMARY. THE GOU HAS NAMED LABOR SECTOR REPRESENTA-
TIVES TO ITS DELEGATION FOR NEXT MONTHS ILO ANNUAL
CONFERENCE. THE QUESTION HAS BEEN UNEXPECTEDLY DELICATE
THIS YEAR BECAUSE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE-UNION CRITICISM OF
CGTU, THE LOCAL LABOR CONFEDERATION, OVER ITS FAILURE TO
CRITICIZE GOU RESTRICTIONS ON NORMAL UNION ACTIVITY.
CGTU MEANWHILE HAD JUSTIFIED ITS INACTION ON FEAR OF
GOVERNMENT REPRISALS. THREE DELEGATES, TWO OF THEM
MAJOR LABOR MOVEMENT FIGURES, HAVE ACCPETED AND THEY
APPARENTLY INTEND TO TAKE A CRITICAL LINE AT GENEVA.
THERE ARE SIGNS HOWEVER THAT THE GOU, WHICH MUST IN ANY CASE
RESPOND TO LONG-STANDING ILO CRITICISM OF ITS RESTRICTIVE
POLICIES, WILL TOLERATE THIS AS A POSSIBLE PRELUDE TO
INCREASED LABOR FREEDOM. END SUMMARY.

2. THE GOU HAS NAMED ROBERTO BORRAZAS, NELSON SALDIVIA AND
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FERNANDO FERREIRA AS LABOR SECTOR MEMBERS OF THE URUGUAYAN
DELEGATION TO NEXT MONTH'S ILO ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT GENEVA.
BORRAZAS IS LEADER OF LOCAL BUS DRIVERS' UNION, FORMER
PRESIDENT OF URUGUAYAN LABOR CONFEDERATION CGTU AND A
PREVIOUS ILO DELEGATE. SALDIVIA IS PRESIDENT OF AN
IMPORTANT LEATHER OWRKERS' UNION, URUGUAYAN REPRESENTA-
TIVE OF THE INTERAMERICAN TEXTILE AND CLOTHING WORKERS'

FEDERATION (FITITVC), AND A VICE PRESIDENT OF CGTU.
FERREIRA IS A RELATIVELY UNKNOWN PORT WORKERS' LEADER.

3. SELECTION OF LABOR DELEGATES HAS BEEN COMPLICATED FOR BOTH THE OFFICIAL AND LABOR SECTORS BY RECENT CRITICISM OF CGTU FROM THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. THIS SURFACED DURING A RECENT JOINT ICFTY/ORIT MISSION HERE (REFTEL) AND WAS BASED ON CGTU'S FAILURE TO TAKE A MORE CRITICAL LINE, ESPECIALLY AT GENEVA, IN THE FACE OF CONTINUING GOU PROHIBITION OF NORMAL TRADE-UNION ACTIVITIES. PRINCIPAL TARGET OF THIS CRITICISM WAS CGTU SECRETARY GENERAL, ARIEL DEL GAUDIO, WHO HAS LED URUGUAYAN LABOR SECTOR REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA FOR THE PAST SEVERAL CONFERENCES. HE WAS EXPECTED TO REPEAT THIS YEAR, IN VIEW OF HIS AMENABILITY TO GOU GUIDANCE AND UNCRITICAL DEFENSE OF OFFICIAL LABOR POLICY AT PREVIOUS ILO SESSIONS. HOWEVER, HIS OBVIOUS LOSS OF CREDIBILITY APPARENTLY LED THE GOU TO LOOK ELSEWHERE.

4. ACCEPTANCE HAS NOT BEEN AN EASY CHOICE FOR THE TWO PRINCIPAL DELEGATES. DEL GAUDIO HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED THAT THE CGTU, WHOSE EXECUTIVE BOARD HE NOW CONTROLS, WOULD NOT PROVIDE REPRESENTATION FOR THE ILO MEETING, IN A BELATED SHOW OF INDEPENDENCE. THIS GESTURE IS NOT EXPECTED TO REGAIN MUCH CREDIBILITY FOR DEL GAUDIO, BUT IT PUT BORRAZAS AND SALDIVIA -- WHO ARE MAJOR OPPONENTS OF HIS
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WITHIN CGTU -- IN THE UNCOMFORTABLE SPOT OF INVITING CENSURE FROM THE CONFEDERATION. MORE SERIOUS, HOWEVER, WILL BE THE DILEMMA THEY FACE OF HAVING TO SPEAK OUT ON URUGUAYAN TRADE UNION CONDITIONS IN SUFFICIENTLY CRITICAL TERMS TO BE CREDIBLE, WHILE STILL DOING SO IN A MANNER ACCEPTABLE TO THE GOU.

5. BORRAZAS CLAIMS HE WILL GO TO GENEVA AND QUOTE TELL IT LIKE IT IS UNQUOTE, REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES. EXPERIENCED, SOME WOULD SAY CYNICAL, BORRAZAS IS NOT PRONE TO QUIXOTIC GESTURES; HE HAS THEREFORE PROBABLY COME TO A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE UNDERSTANDING WITH THE GOU. HOWEVER, HE HAS ALSO BEEN CRITICIZED BY ICFTU FOR HIS OWN STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE GOU AT PREVIOUS ILO SESSIONS, AND IS NOT LIKELY TO GIVE IT A WHITEWASH THIS TIME. SALDIVIA, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS AGONIZED OVER THE DESIGNATION AND ACCEPTED IT ONLY AFTER MUCH SOUL-SEARCHING. HIGHLY REGARDED FOR HIS INCORRUPTIBILITY AND FORCEFUL LEADERSHIP, HE IS ALSO STILL SOMETHING OF A PROVINCIAL AND IS NOT EXPERIENCED IN INTERNATIONAL LABOR POLITICS. HE OBVIOUSLY INTENDS TO BE CRITICAL OF PAST GOU POLICY, AND HE IS KNOWN TO BE CONCERNED OVER POSSIBLE REPRISALS

AFTER HE RETURNS.

6. WE SUSPECT THAT BORRAZAS'S BRAVADO MAY PROVE MORE JUSTIFIED THAN SALDIVIA'S HAMLET-LIKE AGONIZING. THE GOU IS AMPLY AWARE THAT THE ILO HAS IT ON THE CARPET. AT LAST YEAR'S SESSION IT COMMITTED ITSELF TO PREPARE NEW LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD QUOTE NORMALIZE UNQUOTE THE TRADE UNION SITUATION IN URUGUAY--AND WHICH WOULD BE CRITICALLY REVIEWED AT THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE. GETTING AN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY TIMELY START, THE GOU APPOINTED A STUDY COMMISSION LAST JANUARY AND HAD ACTUALLY APPROVED A SET OF QUOTE GUIDELINES UNQUOTE ON WHICH THE PROMISED LEGISLATION WOULD BE BASED. THESE HAVE BEEN SENT TO GENEVA FOR AN INFORMAL PRE-CONFERENCE REVIEW BUT HAVE OTHER-CONFIDENTIAL

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WISE BEEN VERY CLOSELY HELD, APPARENTLY NOT HAVING BEEN DISCUSSED WITH ANYONE IN THE TRADE-UNION SECTOR, INCLUDING THE ILO DELEGATES. WE HAVE SEEN A COPY OF THESE GUIDELINES AND PREDICT THAT THEY WILL NOT ESCAPE CRITICISM AT THE CONFERENCE. HOWEVER, IF TURNED INTO LEGISLATION AND ENFORCED WITH REASONABLE GOOD WILL, THEY COULD PROVIDE AN OPENING FOR RETURN TO NORMAL TRADE UNION ACTIVITY. PEZZULLO

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